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## **AVOYELLES PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL CELEBRATES \$9.7 MILLION EXPANSION**

### **Construction Begins on New High School, Gymnasium, and Performing Arts Buildings**

MANSURA, November 8, 2005 – Community leaders, students, teachers, and parents gathered today in Mansura to celebrate the beginning of a new chapter in education for Avoyelles Parish students—expansion of the Avoyelles Public Charter School to include high school grades 9 through 12, a gymnasium, and a performing arts building.

Currently, the Avoyelles school offers classes for students through 8<sup>th</sup> grade. This new construction will add a 27,819 square foot, two-story high school, a 17,772 square foot gymnasium, and a performing arts building.

“Our students, teachers, and parents are very excited about our new additions,” said Julie Durand, Executive Director of the Avoyelles Public Charter School. “Not only will these additions improve the quality of campus life—our students will be better prepared for college admission.”

The school expansion is being funded by \$9.7 million in USDA Rural Development loans. “USDA Rural Development provides affordable financing for essential facilities in rural communities,” said Michael B. Taylor, State Director for USDA Rural Development in Louisiana. “We are very proud to be a part of this project.”

The new high school will add eight classrooms, a computer lab, lecture hall, library, and science labs to the charter school. The performing arts center will house all high school art and music classes as well as a 350-seat auditorium. School officials predict the high school will be ready for enrollment for the 2006-2007 school year.

USDA Rural Development provides a full range of rural development credit services in rural Louisiana. The Louisiana USDA Rural Development State Office is located at 3727 Government Street, Alexandria, Louisiana 71302, and the telephone number is (318) 473-7921. There are four area offices located throughout the state to serve Louisiana residents. Further information on USDA Rural Development’s loan and grant programs can be obtained by visiting Rural Development’s web site at: <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov>.

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